

ARTICLE APPEARED
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2 Ex-FBI Aides Say Spying Rules Too Restrictive

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Two former FBI officials convicted in 1980 of authorizing break-ins at the homes of friends and relatives of radical group members told Congress yesterday that restrictions on FBI spying are too severe.

Mark Felt and Edward Miller testified at Senate hearings on the proposed easing of rules laid down in 1976 by then-Attorney General Edward Levi.

Felt, once acting associate director of the FBI, said the "cumbersome restrictions" of the Levi guidelines prevent the FBI from keeping track of terrorist groups.

"It is because of these restrictions that the FBI cannot now investigate violence-prone groups such as the National Socialist Party of America, with which John W. Hinckley Jr. was associated for a time," Felt testified.

Miller, who once headed the FBI's intelligence division, said the guidelines were a "a hole" in the FBI's authority to gather intelligence needed for security reasons.

"We want to loosen the guidelines . . .," he said.

Felt and Miller were convicted and fined in 1980 for violating constitutional guarantees against unreasonable search and seizures by authorizing break-ins into the homes of relatives and friends of Weather Underground members. President Reagan pardoned them last year.